



**(U//FOUO) Joining S3: An Interview with Rick Ledgett**

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*(U//FOUO) SIDtoday's interview with Rick Ledgett, who has returned from Hawaii and started work as Assistant Deputy Director for Data Acquisition (S3)*

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- (U//FOUO) You returned recently from a tour as the NSA Representative to the Pacific Command. Overall, how did the Command feel about the SIGINT support they are getting?

(S) PACOM was happy with the support we give them, but with so much going on in their theater, they have an unbounded capacity to absorb all of information we give them, and then some! When a command isn't fighting, it's planning - and PACOM is doing a lot of planning, especially regarding Korea and China. That requires a lot of intelligence.

(S) They always have many real-world operations underway. PACOM conducts Counterterrorism operations in the Philippines and has several hundred troops there; they carried out relief operations after the tsunami disaster; and they must be ready to evacuate American citizens from unstable countries. They even have a homeland defense role in Hawaii, Guam and the other U.S. territories in the Pacific - NORTHCOM doesn't cover that part of the world. PACOM is a demanding customer, but the SIGINT system does an outstanding job of satisfying their INs [Intelligence Needs].

(S) I can also tell you that PACOM is a sophisticated user of SIGINT. They incorporate Information Operations into their plans, are good at merging Information Assurance and SIGINT, and make very good use of what we provide them.

- (U) Did your tour in Hawaii yield any "lessons learned" that you would like to apply here at headquarters?

(TS//SI) Yes. As NCPAC, I was the senior NSA representative in that region, and this included dealing with US and allied cryptologic activities in places like Australia, New Zealand, Taiwan, Korea, Japan, and Thailand. No one organization or country has the capability to do everything all by itself, but by working together with all of them, we accomplish a great deal. The lesson here is that teamwork is essential. Even if you *can* do it alone, why would you want to?

(U) I also learned that you can't let organizational boundaries stop you from getting things done. Organizations are there for the "care and feeding" of people and capabilities, but it's the interaction between those organizations -- and the seamless transfer of work from one to the other -- that really leads to results.

- (U//FOUO) Now that you have been named the Assistant Deputy Director for Data Acquisition (S3), what will be the main tasks that you will focus on?

(U) My first task will be to learn about all that is going on here in DA. It's a big and complex organization with some of the smartest people in America doing really neat stuff. We're doing the most cutting-edge things being done anywhere. I tell people that I'd do this job even if I didn't have to work for a living! I want to understand it all so that I can explain to people what we do and get the necessary resources to carry out our job.

(U) Beyond that, we have many new hires and, on the other end of the spectrum, many of what we used to call the "big red blob" on the Agency's demographic chart - NSAers approaching retirement. We need to think through how to transfer that intellectual capital to the new generation. I don't have the answers yet, but we need to address it. If we can combine that

experience and operational savvy with the energy and new ideas that the new hires bring, the sky's the limit.

(U) There are three ideas I like to apply to my work:

1. There are very few bad people, but there ARE good people in bad situations. It's a manager's job to identify those situations and fix them
  2. Everyone is entitled to a good, fulfilling day's work. If people don't feel they are really contributing, they should talk to their manager until they get some meaningful work to do. If that doesn't work, I want to hear about it.
  3. As you rise in an organization, it becomes harder to get undiluted opinions. Help us out by giving us the plain, unvarnished truth. In return, you'll hear truth from us.
- (U) What was your first job at the Agency?

(U) I was in the Army for 11 years, but my first job as a civilian was at the NCS [National Cryptologic School], working as a course developer and teacher. I mainly taught Traffic Analysis.

- (U) What was the most rewarding experience you've had during your NSA career?

(S//SI) When I was at Bad Aibling Station in Germany in the early 1990's, the situation in the Balkans was a major concern. There was even talk that the 1st Armored Division might have to go into Bosnia. The European Command wanted more intelligence of a tactical nature, but they weren't getting it. NSA had the information, but it was considered too low-level to report. Once we understood what the Army wanted and realized we could give it to them, we started a project called PURPLE DRAGON at BA to provide this information. It was a great success.

(S//SI) For example, when we told US Air Forces Europe that pallet drops of MREs [meals ready-to-eat] were causing damage when they landed, the Command switched to what are called "flutter drops" of individual packets - and that worked out much better. Feedback from US Army Europe, who was doing the detailed planning for the 1st AD's operation, was that the information we provided on the condition of roads and bridges was essential. In many ways this was a precursor of the kind of tactical support we provide today in Iraq, allowing the tactical commanders to steer their operations in near real-time based on SIGINT.

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